Planning for Success

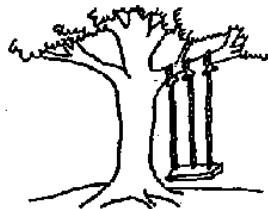## Making Project Decisions – Process or Prognostication

The decision making process established for a project is critical to its success. If the process is not well defined, there is a high risk of producing a solution that is not aligned to the needs.

Consider the following analogy that is commonly referred to when broaching the development of a solution to meet a need:
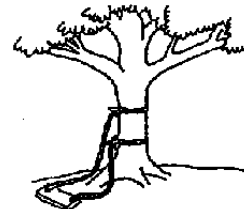
The superintendent has been approached by a principal with a request for a swing desired by the students in his elementary school. His vision for the swing is #1.
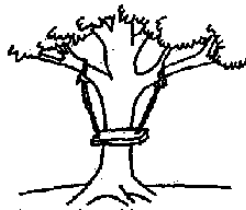

1. As Proposed by the Project Sponsor
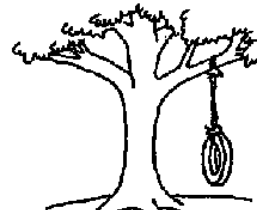
2. As Specified in the Project Request

3. As Designed by the Facilities Department

4. As Built by the High School Woodshop

5. As Installed by the School Maintenance Staff

6. What the Kids Wanted

The superintendent thinks this is a great idea and he generates a Project Request Form with a sketch of the swing (shown above in #2) to the facilities department.

The Director of Facilities sends an e-mail his construction manager telling him that the superintendent wants a swing built out at the elementary school. The construction manager writes up a work order which is taken on by a staff member who has time to design it for someone else to build. His specifications will result in #3.

The high school woodshop class has been assigned the task of building the swing. A student reviews the specifications and immediately determines that the design won't result in a swing that works. Modifications are made and the product in #4 is made available for installation.

The school maintenance person doing the installation receives the swing, determines that the tree that is to hold the swing needs to be modified to allow the swing to swing. The result is #5.

Once the students see the result of their request, they are mortified. All they wanted was a tire swing that would be hung from a branch of the tree as in #6.

Chances are, you've seen lots of really cool swings but because you've never built one you may not have a clue on how to get started. The key to ensuring that the Enterprise Information Management System you put together will meet your school/district's needs and that the anticipated benefits will be realized is to **follow a proven logical process for sound decision making**. You want to identify your data sharing requirements and keep them in the forefront. How will you know when you are done if you have no concept of where you are going?